REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 8, 10, 18, 26-27, and 30-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. 6,088,444 to Walker, et al., and claims 1-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 6,597,685 to Miloslavsky et al. in view of Walker et al.

In view of the cancellation of claims 1-43, the rejections are moot.

Nonetheless, Applicant submits that the cited art fails to teach or suggest, individually and collectively, at least the following italicized features of newly added claims 44 and 58:

44.   A method for routing contacts in an E-commerce contact center, comprising:
(a) providing, on a first communication channel and as part of a first contact with a customer, the first contact being a potential sales transaction with the customer, at least one web page to a web browser associated with the customer, wherein the customer selects, for possible purchase, a set of one or more items from the provided at least one web page;
(b) receiving, from the customer and as part of the same sales transaction, a request for servicing by an agent of the contact center, wherein the servicing is to be effected by a second contact with the customer on a second communication channel different from the first communication channel;
(c) *evaluating at least one item in the set of one or more items to identify an item value in the set*; and
(d) *routing the request of the customer to an agent in the contact center, the agent being selected based, at least in part, on the identified item value.*

58.   A system for routing contacts in an E-commerce contact center, comprising:
a server operable (a) to provide, on a first communication channel and as part of a first contact and a potential sales transaction with a customer, at least one web page to a web browser associated with the customer, wherein the customer selects, for possible acquisition, a set of one or more items from the provided at least one web page; and (b) receive, from the customer and as part of the same sales transaction, a request for servicing by an agent of the contact center, wherein the servicing is to be effected by a second contact with the customer on a second communication channel different from the first communication channel;
an evaluator operable to evaluate at least one item in the set of one or more items to identify an item value in the set; and
a router operable to route the request of the customer to an agent in the contact center, the agent being selected based, at least in part, on the identified item value.

71.   A method for routing contacts in an E-commerce contact center, comprising:

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(a) providing, on a first communication channel and as part of a potential sales transaction with a customer, at least one web page to a web browser associated with the customer, wherein the customer selects, for possible purchase, a set of one or more items from the provided at least one web page;

(b) receiving, from the customer and as part of the same sales transaction, a request for servicing by an agent of the contact center, wherein the servicing is to be effected on a second communication channel different from the first communication channel;

(c) *downloading, onto a computer executing the customer's web browser, an applet comprising an evaluator;*

(d) *the downloaded evaluator evaluating at least one item in the set of one or more items to identify at least one of (i) a value of one or more items and (ii) a type of one or more items in the set;*

(e) *receiving from the downloaded evaluator an identified at least one of (i) a value of one or more items and (ii) a type of one or more items in the set;*

(f) *routing the request of the customer to an agent in the contact center, the agent being selected based, at least in part, on the identified at least one of (i) a value of one or more items and (ii) a type of one or more items in the set.*

Each year hundreds of millions dollars of potential business are lost in E-commerce web-sites due to the failure of a customer to complete an order. Studies have shown that a significant number of shopping carts in E-commerce web-sites are abandoned because the customer is unable to obtain timely or appropriate service from the Internet call center supporting the web-site. In many cases, the customer has questions before he can complete the order which can only be answered by speaking with a working agent at the Internet call center. In other cases, the customer must speak to a working agent at the Internet call center to complete the order.

The present invention uses the type(s) and/or value(s) of item(s) selected by a customer during a Web browsing session to route to an appropriate agent an outgoing contact with the customer on a different channel. More important contacts are thus serviced more rapidly in contrast to less important contacts, thereby enhancing the profitability of the E commerce center. As will be

appreciated, the servicing contact can be in the form of a voice communication or an electronic communication, such as e-mail, fax, webform, VoIP, and voice message. The use of the type and/or value of item(s) in the collection to determine the quality and skills of the agent to service the customer and/or to prioritize the contact should curtail abandonment of high-value transactions and thereby reduce overall business losses.

Walker et al.

Walker et al. is directed to a priority call queuing system that allows the called site to exercise control over the position in a phone queue of an incoming call based on the economic value assigned to the incoming call. When the incoming call is received, an interactive voice response unit (IVR) interrogates the caller and determines information such as identity of the caller, quantity of items to be ordered, item numbers, catalog numbers, and other data from which an economic value of the call can be determined. (Col. 2, lines 52-57.) The economic value of a call can be based upon a total number of items ordered, a total dollar amount of the order and/or the profitability of the order and the status of the customer. (Col. 3, line 64-col. 4, line 8.) For each order, the database includes the call tracking number, the quantity of items ordered, the item numbers of the items ordered, the item price and item description, and a catalog number for each ordered item. (Col. 4, line 66-col. 5, line 13.) Thereafter, the call information is used, in conjunction with pricing and other economic data, present in a database at the called site, to assign an economic value to the call. (Col. 3, lines 46-48.) The call's position in the queue is then adjusted in a manner that is hidden from the caller, in accordance with the determined economic value. The rank positions of other calls within the queue are adjusted accordingly. (Col. 3, lines 48-63.)

Walker et al. is directed to routing of an incoming customer contact only based on order information obtained by an IVR from the customer as part of the same customer contact on the same channel. At most, Walker et al. teaches the use of item value in selecting an appropriate resource

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for completing an incoming current contact. It does not teach the use of an icon in a Web page to initiate a request for customer assistance coupled with product order analysis as a solution to decrease the likelihood of abandonment of the browsing session by the customer. It therefore does not teach or suggest the routing of a second contact with a customer on a second channel based on information obtained in a first contact with the customer on a first channel, particularly a Web browsing session. The architecture of Walker et al. is directed to conventional voice telephony and therefore provides no motivation to one of ordinary skill in the art to configure an E-commerce center in the manner claimed to curtail abandonment of high-value transactions and thereby reduce overall business losses.

To provide this teaching, the Examiner turns to Miloslavsky et al.

Miloslavsky et al.

Miloslavsky et al. is directed to an IP-capable call center system having a managing computer connected to a plurality of PC's at agent stations on a local area network. The managing computer is adapted to receive and route IP network telephony calls to the agent stations according to predetermined routing rules. A statistics server in the call center provides status of call center objects, among multiple status possibilities, to requesting applications in the processes of routing calls. Requesting applications, in addition to requests for object states, provide priority indications of object states desired. The statistics server provides the highest priority state to a requesting application. In the absence of a priority indication the statistics server provides status of objects according to a default indication.

At col. 12, line 2-col. 13, line 16, Miloslavsky et al. describes an E commerce site and sales methodology. The customer can place an order by clicking on an order icon or request service by clicking on a help icon. When the "help" icon is selected by the customer, a separate telephone communication is established with the agent. The Web page and identity of the customer site are automatically provided to the servicing agent.

Miloslavsky et al. does not teach, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the evaluation of one or more items selected by a customer for possible purchase to identify the type(s) and/or value(s) of at least one item in the collection and routing a contact of the customer to at least one working agent and queue based on the value(s) or type(s) of the item(s). (Office Action at pages 3-4.) Regarding contact routing, Miloslavsky et al. states at col. 12, line 64 to col. 13, line 7) as follows:

> When button 1118 is clicked, browser 1116 sends a telephone service request to "phone.html" in server 1132. Server 1132 then sends the request and associated data (*e.g.*, the identity of the customer site 104 and the HTML document associated with the web page displayed on browser 1116) to a service request process (SRP) 1168. SRP 1168 is a software module which could run on server 1132 or on a separate data processing device. *SRP 1168 selects an available service agent in accordance with predetermined criteria (e.g., availability of agents, previous interaction between certain agent and customer site 1104).*

(Emphasis added.) At col. 38, lines 20-35, Miloslavsky et al. does disclose "the product expertise of the support person", as an agent selection criteria; however, it does not specifically state what "product expertise" means. Contrary to the Examiner's conclusion, product expertise does not inherently require the E commerce site to analyze the product order contained in the Web page displayed to the customer. In the same manner that "sales"expertise" does not refer necessarily to a skill to sell only a specific type of product among a number of retailer's or wholesaler's product types, "product expertise" does not necessarily mean that the agent has expertise only with a specific type of product. "Product expertise," for example, can be a skill of the agent in performing tasks associated with product questions generally (rather than a specific expertise for a specific type of product in the customer-selected grouping of products), whether in connection with sales transactions or answering product-related questions. For example, the agent having "product expertise" could have a high level of skill in answering warranty or operating questions about all of a retailer's products.

Nowhere (not even in the text cited specifically by the Examiner) does Miloslavsky et al. teach specifically the use of the type and/or value of items currently associated with a contact, such as the contents of a shopping cart, specifically to route a contact to a resource. The reference teaches

only traditional call center criteria, namely customer identity, customer history and agent skills as the criteria used in the routing decision. The Examiner has further conceded that Miloslavsky et al. does not teach the use of the value of one or more items currently associated with a contact to determine the resource to which the contact is to be routed. (First Office Action at page 3.) In fact, by teaching the use of traditional call center routing criterion in routing contacts Miloslavsky et al. teaches away from using either the identity of item(s) or value(s) of item(s) currently associated with a contact as a basis for selecting a resource to service the contact.

Respecting independent claim 71, neither Walker et al. nor Miloslavsky et al. teach or suggest downloading of the evaluator onto the customer's computer so that the evaluator can examine on the customer's computer the type and/or value of the items in the set of items selected by the customer. This is a far more efficient configuration than transmitting all of the Web page contents to the E commerce center for analysis. Although Miloslavsky et al, is directed to an E commerce center, it does not teach the analysis of the contents of the Web page in connection with contact routing let alone the performance of the analysis on the customer's computer. Miloslavsky et al. simply teaches that the contents of the Web page (or the HTML document) displayed to the customer is sent automatically to the servicing agent to be displayed on the agent's computer. (Col. 12, line 64-col. 13, line 16.)

Moreover, there is motivation to combine the Walker et al. and Miloslavsky et al. references to realize the E-commerce system of the present invention. As noted, Walker et al. describes a traditional circuit-switched telephony site in which order information is collected by an IVR. Walker et al. teaches the use of product order information only in routing the current contact and not a request for assistance on a separate channel associated with the current contact. In solving the problem of high Web transaction abandonment rates, one of ordinary skill in the art would thus not consider Walker et al. to be instructive in designing an E commerce site.

Accordingly, the pending claims are allowable.

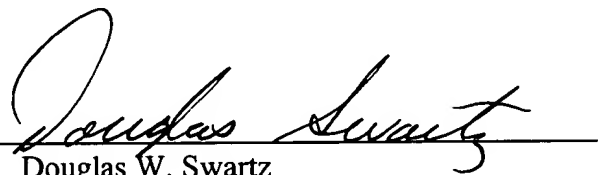The dependent claim provide further reasons for allowance.

Dependent claims 46 and 60 require the evaluator to be downloaded to the customer's computer to analyze the selected grouping of items.

Dependent claims 50, 64, and 77 require the results of the analysis to be contained in a cookie.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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